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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 001216

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AF/S FOR S. HILL  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVILLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/03/2016  
TAGS: PGOV PHUM PREL ASEC ZI  
SUBJECT: COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS CIO INVOLVEMENT IN STEVENSON  
ATTACK

REF: REFTEL: HARARE 1164

Classified By: Classified By: Ambassador Christopher W. Dell under Section 1.4 b/d

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) The commission of inquiry report on the Trudy Stevenson attack concludes that the GOZ's Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) security apparatus was most likely responsible for the assault. The report notes that the MDC's internal failings and divisions have made both its pro- and anti-Senate factions susceptible to CIO infiltration. The report credits Morgan Tsvangirai and the other anti-Senate leadership for having established the commission and for their public commitment to non-violence. However, it faults them for failing to follow through on the recommendations of previous commissions, especially with regard to disciplining violent party members. End Summary.

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CIO Involvement  
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¶2. (U) As reported earlier (reftel), the independent commission established by the anti-Senate MDC faction concluded that the CIO was most likely behind the attack on pro-Senate MDC MP Stevenson and her colleagues. The commission's report is now public and it states that &all evidence points to the involvement of the Central Intelligence Organization in the attack on Mrs. Stevenson.<sup>8</sup> The report claims both sides of the internally divided anti-Senate faction in Mabvuku, along with the pro-Senate faction, had been infiltrated by the CIO. It names two individuals within the MDC hierarchy in Mabvuku that it believes are CIO agents.

¶ 13. (U) The report goes on to claim that the infiltrators in all three groups were &working together and coordinating their activities<sup>8</sup> prior to the attack. The infiltrators &used members of the MDC or their own people pretending to be MDC members to perpetrate the attack in an effort (which has appeared successful) to cause instability and further friction between the two opposition groupings.<sup>8</sup> The commission cites the failure of the police to launch a proper investigation and the deliberate distortion of the details of the attack by the government press as further evidence of official involvement.

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MDC Role and Commission Recommendations  
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¶ 14. (U) The report faults the MDC,s internal divisions for allowing the infiltration to occur. The report says that the anti-Senate faction provincial and district organizations are also divided, compounding the leadership split in the MDC that occurred last year. The commission concluded that this factionalism created openings for the CIO and police to infiltrate the party, create divisions, and influence its actions. The commission recommended that to prevent infiltration and manipulation by the government the MDC retool its security apparatus and handle with caution contacts with supposedly sympathetic government officials. The commission, however, noted that similar recommendations had been made in the past but that the leadership had failed to act.

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¶ 15. (U) Moreover, although the commission gives Tsvangirai and the other anti-Senate faction leaders credit for setting up the inquiry and for allowing it to operate without interference, it faults them and their pro-Senate colleagues for allowing a culture of violence and impunity to emerge in both factions of the MDC. While finding that MDC leaders had consistently warned against engaging in political violence, the commission nonetheless reported that the leadership has failed to take concrete actions: "Public acknowledgment is not sufficient...perpetrators must be punished." The commission noted that the party's reluctance to discipline members found to have used violence in the past weakened the impact of its admonitions condemning violence.

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Reaction  
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¶ 16. (SBU) As reported earlier, the pro-Senate faction,s reaction has been disappointing, rejecting the commission,s independence as well as report in their determined to use the attack to score political points of Tsvangirai. The government reaction has been much the same, though with the added twist of deliberately distorting the report to buttress their claim that the MDC is a violent party.

¶ 17. (SBU) For his part, Tsvangirai has also failed to make proper use of the report. In a briefing to the press and diplomatic community before the release of the report (reftel), Tsvangirai noted that the report did not implicate him personally in the Stevenson attack, but failed to address the report,s allegation that the MDC has continued to tolerate a culture of violence and did not discuss CIO infiltration of his party.

¶ 18. (C) Anti-Senate MDC Secretary General Tendai Biti on September 26 told polchief that he was disappointed that Tsvangirai, in his briefing, did not directly address the

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MDC,s deficiencies, specifically its failure to deal with violence and its porous security structure. Biti said he

hoped the MDC executive committee, at its next meeting, would direct Tsvangirai to publicly do so. He was also critical of the MDC MP for Mabvuku, Timothy Mubawu, whom he believed created the conditions for the attack by seeking to prevent Stevenson and her party from organizing in his constituency. Biti theorized that Mubawu's intent was to harass Stevenson but that the CIO infiltrators had used the opening he gave them to physically attack her in order to embarrass the anti-Senate MDC

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Comment  
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¶9. (C) The incompetence of the police, which may have been deliberate, had largely taken the steam out of the investigation and prosecution of the attack on Stevenson even before the report's release. Moreover, as the report makes clear, it seems likely that the real perpetrators of the attack will never be identified. That is unfortunate but predictable. The government's interest in the case has all along been to use it to smear Tsvangirai and to drive a deeper wedge between the two MDC factions. Although they have arguably achieved both goals, Tsvangirai's decision to create the commission and to let it operate independently has gone a long way to limit the damage. So too has Stevenson's principled stand asserting CIO involvement against the wishes of her faction's leadership. In the end, the attack was likely just one more regrettable incident of political violence by a government whose president publicly endorses

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police brutality, while cynically accusing others of violence.  
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